

FADE IN:

EXT. THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - NIGHT

SUPER: "GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK. 1979."

A cold October night.

Two security guards stand outside a luxurious Cuban nightclub.

A yellow neon sign atop the club's imposing entrance reads:
"THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL."

DOLLY IN THROUGH THE CLUB'S ENTRANCE AS A COUPLE IS ALLOWED IN.

INT. THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The final minute of Celia Cruz and Willie Colón's *Burundanga* plays in increasingly higher volume as we approach the inside of the club.

The club is spectacular. A 30-foot high ceiling sprinkled with crystal Parisian chandeliers. All guests and staff in black tie. No hats. No shorts. Not a single sign of inelegance.

Dining tables with the finest Egyptian tablecloth surround the dance floor, where a handful of couples enjoy each other's company.

Overseeing the dance floor, a live band of highly qualified, Cuban musicians.

And by their side a half a dozen of female dancers who grace the audience's view with their persuasive looks and long legs. Occasionally they step down from the stage and onto the dance floor.

At a two-person table on the club's perimeter sits DEAN (49) - the club's gray-haired, chiseled jaw owner. His forehead creasing noticeably as he reads through the club's paperwork, not paying attention to his surroundings.

Off-screen applause signal the end of *Burundanga*.

BAND'S MALE SINGER (O.S.)

Thank you, thank you very much.
It's getting cold outside so I'll
do my best to keep you folks warm.

Dean makes note of something on the document he is reviewing.

Chan Chan by Buena Vista Social Club plays.

Dean drops his pen and looks up at the stage - as if struck by a profound realization.

The attention he previously devoted to the paperwork he now devotes to the stage. Waves of numbing memories wash over him.

BAND'S MALE SINGER (CONT'D)
(singing *Chan Chan*)
"De Alto Cedro voy para Marcané.
Llego a Cueto voy para Mayari."

Dean - now mouth breathing - takes a long, pensive sip of his Old Fashioned.

The dancers on stage twist their bodies and whip their hair.

EACH MEMBER OF THE BAND

Pours their heart into the song. The BAND'S MALE SINGER breaking more sweat than a wedding photographer.

A WOMAN on the dance floor stamps her HUSBAND's lips quickly but effectively.

A single tear makes its way down Dean's cheek.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - FOYER

AN ATTRACTIVE COUPLE in their mid 40s enters.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE HOST
Welcome to The Miramar Special.

MR. VON MAATSEN
Thank you.

MRS. VON MAATSEN
(Smiling politely)
Thank you.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE HOST
Can I get the last name on the reservation?

MR. VON MAATSEN
Von Maatsen. Two a's.

The ATTRACTIVE FEMALE HOST checks the reservation booklet.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE HOST
 Mr. and Mrs. Von Maatsen, welcome.
 And may I ask, are you celebrating
 any special occasion?

MRS. VON MAATSEN
 Just... Love.

Mr. and Mrs. Von Maatsen smile at each other.

ATTRACTIVE FEMALE HOST
 (smiling back)
 Lovely. I'll direct you to the coat
 check and then to your table.

MR. VON MAATSEN
 Perfect.

The host holds the door to the main room open for the couple
 and then walks in herself.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - MAIN ROOM

Tito Gomez's *Vereda Tropical* plays.

Mr. And Mrs. Von Maatsen take their seats.

Next to their table, SIX OPERA PERFORMERS in their mid-
 twenties toast, celebrating what seems like an important
 achievement.

The club's MÂITRE D' (43) approaches Dean's table - who is
 back to looking at paperwork.

MÂITRE D'
 (pointing to the opera
 performers)
 Sir, sorry to interrupt, but the
 kids at Table One wanted to come
 over to introduce themselves.
 Should I send them over?

DEAN
 Sure, send them over.
 (beat)
 Table One you said?

MÂITRE D'
 Yes.

DEAN
 Have they just arrived?

MÂITRE D'

No more than five minutes.

DEAN

Ok, better. After they come over, switch them to Table Seventeen or Eighteen. Giaco and his boys are coming over tonight. We need Table One free for them.

MÂITRE D'

Oh... I am terribly sorry, sir. I didn't know.

The opera performers from Table One approach Dean's table, nervously.

OPERA PERFORMER #1

Mr. Cavanagh, we just wanted to say. It's an honor to be at your club. We've heard so many great things about it and I must say: it exceeds the expectations.

DEAN

I appreciate the kind words.

OPERA PERFORMER #4

(opening a box of
cigarettes)

Would you care for a smoke?

DEAN

Thanks, but I've quit.

OPERA PERFORMER #2

You know, we are here to celebrate the opening weekend of Madame Butterfly at the Met Opera.

DEAN

I heard it's a beautiful production. Congratulations.

As Dean and the kids exchange niceties, we see waiters in the background cleaning the table the kids were just seated at.

OPERA PERFORMER #3

And we would really appreciate it if you would have a drink to celebrate with us.

DEAN
(smiling)
Certainly. I'll swing by.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - DEAN'S OFFICE

PETE (52) - a short and chubby Englishman with curly golden and white hair - reads off of a dossier as Dean sits at his desk listening.

PETE
Yeah, for some odd reason us
Europeans are especially keen on
Taittinger.

DEAN
Let's double our purchases then.

PETE
And ditch the Krug?

DEAN
Yeah, ditch the Krug.

PETE
And the Cristal?

DEAN
What are the margins?

PETE
50 percent.

Dean makes a do-I-even-have-to-answer-that face.

PETE (CONT'D)
(breaking a smile)
Alright, I'll keep it.

Knocks on the door.

DEAN
Come in!

MÂITRE D'
Terribly sorry, Sir - but they have
arrived.

Dean sighs at the unpleasant surprise.

He slides a golden disc on the wall, which swings upward like a pendulum, revealing a hidden peephole that offers a clear view into the club.

He looks into the peephole.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - MAIN ROOM

THREE MEN in their mid twenties sit at Table One, each accompanied by a female partner. The men wear suits but not black tie like everyone else.

The tannest of the group, who sports a chest thick with hair and a golden necklace, recounts a story.

GIACO

(to the two other men)

And so imagine this. Small town, middle of nowhere. One of those places where everyone knows each other. And I'm in this tiny fuckin' supermarket, tighter than you know what... Now, I turn to the guy who is stocking the shelf and say: I need some Sicilian tomatoes, you got any?

The two men laugh.

GIACO (CONT'D)

(impersonating the shelf-stocker)

And he says: "Perdon, señor. But we no have tomatas de Sicily. Tenemos solamente from California."

More chuckles from the two.

GIORGIE

And what'd you say?

GIACO

You two know me. I'm not buying Californian tomatoes. So in good spirit, and I mean it, in totally good spirit, I turn to the Mexican midget and go...

Giacco opens his jacket, revealing a shoulder holster with a gun.

GIACO (CONT'D)

"Well you better find some Sicilian tomatoes, 'cause I'm not buying that shit."

Forced laughter from the two other men.

GIACO (CONT'D)

And so he runs like a fuckin' idiot outta there.

(beat)

But you know what the worse about it all was? Even if I started all that as a joke, it got me in the mood to eat tomatoes. So after he left, I started looking for some... And guess what I found?

GIORGIE

What?

GIACO

Fuckin' Sicilian tomatoes!

The three of them laugh hysterically.

GIORGIE

Instant classic! I'm tellin' ya, instant!

Dean approaches their table. Giaco gets up from his seat.

GIACO

(sarcastically)

Dean, my man! Welcome to my club!

Dean laughs politely, against his inner will.

Giaco initiates a quick but firm handshake-to-hug.

One of the female dancers - EVA (26) - dances by them. Giaco reaches for her arm and pulls her towards him.

GIACO (CONT'D)

(whispering loudly in her ear)

How much for a private one of those, my pretty lady of the night?

Eva tugs her arm away from him, deflecting his advance and continuing to dance as if nothing had happened.

GIACO (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be shy!

Giaco turns to Dean, making a sarcastic "someone is overreacting" face.

Dean fakes a smile.

GIACO (CONT'D)
(pointing to his friends
at the table)
You know Giorgie, Tommy.

Giorgie and Tommy raise their hands, as if to say "Hello."

DEAN
Of course, good to see you guys.

GIACO
(pointing to the girls at
the table)
And these are...

There is enough of a silence for it to become obvious that Giaco does not know the name of any of the THREE LADIES. Not even of his date - a dark-and-long-haired, angelic beauty - Ines.

SUSAN
(smiling)
Susan.

JILL
(smiling)
Jill.

INES
(smiling)
Ines.

DEAN
It is great to meet you, girls.
(beat)
If you need anything, don't
hesitate to ask me. I'll be around!

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - WOMEN'S BATHROOM

Looking at herself in the mirror, Ines fixes her lip stick and touches up her makeup.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - MAIN ROOM

On her way back to Table One, Ines marvels at the

FEMALE DANCERS

And how they move to the music - swinging and swaying their hips smoothly to the band's rhythm.

She takes a seat.

GIACO

(to Mrs. Von Maatsen, at
the neighboring table)
Are you sure he's coming back,
Miss? He's been in there an awful
long time. You sure you don't wanna
join us?

MRS. VON MAATSEN

For the last time, I'm okay where I
am. Thank you.

GIACO

Well it's surely stupid of you to
think you can do better than me.

MRS. VON MAATSEN

(raising her tone)
One more word from you and I'll
call someone.

GIACO

(breaking an evil smile)
Do it.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - BACKSTAGE - DAWN

Dean - whose bowtie is now undone - talks to Eva as she
undresses behind a folding screen.

EVA (O.S.)

This is not the first time he does
this.

DEAN

I know Eva, I know how you feel. I
wish I could do something about it.
But you know how it goes...

EVA (O.S.)

And that's exactly why I quit.

DEAN

Oh, come on. You know you're the
best. I need you to lead the girls.
I can't have you quit.

EVA

(peeking out of the
folding screen)
Then ban them from the club.

Dean gives her a helpless look.

EVA (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's what I thought.

THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - DEAN'S OFFICE

Dean sits at his office desk, looking at a framed photograph - disappointed at his cowardly self. We see the back of the frame only.

He firmly grips a small, red velvet box.

EXT. THE MIRAMAR SPECIAL - DAWN

Dean enters through the back door of a black Cadillac.

INT. DEAN'S BUILDING'S LOBBY - EARLY MORNING

KOSTAS - the building's doorman - holds the door open for Dean.

KOSTAS
Welcome home, Mr. Cavanagh.

DEAN
Thank you, Kostas.

He makes his way to the elevator.

KOSTAS
You know, two weeks from now you might just become the hardest working man in the building.

Dean turns around.

DEAN
(smiling)
We're gonna miss you, old man.

The elevator dings.